ESCAPE ADVENTURE MODULE

MONOMAZI

FORMAT: FOLDER

DEVELOPED BY:	INCLUSION TOPIC:	TARGET GROUP:
		14+
Chris van Walraven - Democratic Secondary school VO de Vallei, The Netherlands	Loneliness	N° OF PLAYERS: 2 - 5 TIME: 60 min.

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"A GATEWAY TO ANOTHER PART OF MY BRAIN, A WAY TO ESCAPE MY DAILY LIFE IN A FUN AND STIMULATING WAY. AND ALL THIS WHILST BONDING WITH OTHER PEOPLE."

LEX EIIT

ESCAPE
EXCLUSION

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Aim of the Adventure: The escape adventure can be interesting to educators who want to make their students think about topics such as 'inclusion', 'loneliness' or 'forensic research'. The adventure can be used to learn more about inclusivity, cognitive skills, social skills or handling information, as mentioned earlier. It can, of course, also be played just for fun or practising English skills.

Learning Objectives

- To develop cognitive skills (deduction, problem solving, mathematics, logical thinking);
- To gain biological knowledge (such as about animal hair, knowledge about forensic research, practising reading);
- To develop social competences (working in team and communication skills);
- To develop skills to find and organise information;
- To raise awareness of reasons for loneliness;
- To understand supportive behaviour when it comes to loneliness.

Duration

Preparation of the materials:	30 - 60 min (depending on the speed of the printer)
Setting up the space before the adventure:	5 min
Intro time:	5 min
Play time:	120 min
Debrief/ evaluation time:	Min 10 min

N° of players

The topic is serious and the adventure is quite realistic. Besides murder and loneliness, there is mention of discrimination, war, drugs and conspiracy. The adventure is as light hearted as a typical murder mystery program, but if you feel uncomfortable with any of the mentioned topics, you might not want to play this escape adventure.

No special skills are needed for the escape adventure, but the difficulty of the puzzles requires an age of about 14 or older. Anyone of that age that can play a boardgame for two hours will be able to play this escape adventure. To lower the difficulty a facilitator with an insider knowledge, who can guide the players somewhat, by giving hints, asking the right questions or guiding the players focus, can be present during the game.

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General overview of the Adventure

The players receive the folder and envelope, and are instructed by the facilitator. The players explore the folder and solve puzzles.

Five different people (Isiah, Kala, Liseli, Meili and Paul) who found themselves lonely joined a self-help program called MonoMazi. Isiah is lonely because of his trauma which makes him grumpy towards others. Kala is lonely because of her drug addiction which makes her manipulate others. Liseli is lonely because of her anxiety. Meili is lonely because she thinks differently (high IQ and believing in conspiracy theories) which drives others off. Paul is lonely because he is an ex-prisoner. The group of five plays a murder mystery game together once a week, but one night Liseli gets actually murdered. Nobody knows who did it, but it must be one of the other four. CSI has been handling the crime case so far, but to prevent the wrong person going to jail, the case file is now in the hands of the players who have to solve this murder mystery.
All the information is in the folder. The overarching puzzle is finding the necessary information in the folder, organising it and then deducting who the killer is (a la zebra puzzle), but to get all the necessary information there are five smaller puzzles that need to be solved.

The game ends when the players have chosen their main suspect and open the envelope. This contains the confession of the person who did it. They reflect on the game and their experiences. Now is also a good time to talk about the topics the facilitator wants to pay attention to.

Guiding the process

A facilitator needs to instruct the players briefly before the game starts and talk things through when the game is finished. To lower the difficulty a facilitator with insider knowledge, who can guide the players somewhat, by giving hints, asking the right questions or guiding the players focus, can be present during the game.

If you want to be able to help/guide the players it is advised to know the answers (or have them at hand) and perhaps solve the puzzles yourself to better understand the problem solving of them.

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Level of ownership

Do not force students to play the game. Rather ask them if they're interested in playing. Try not to meddle too much with the gameplay. Leave the students to it. Help when needed, but never too much, and remember it's the game of the players, not the game of the educator.

Level of inclusion

The way the puzzles of the escape adventure come together encourages the players to work together and make use of each other's strong points. It is almost impossible for one player to take over.

The puzzles are diverse, so every player, no matter their skill set, can latch onto something. Even the characters in the story are diverse, so players can more easily get into the story and the lives of the people in it, no matter who they are.
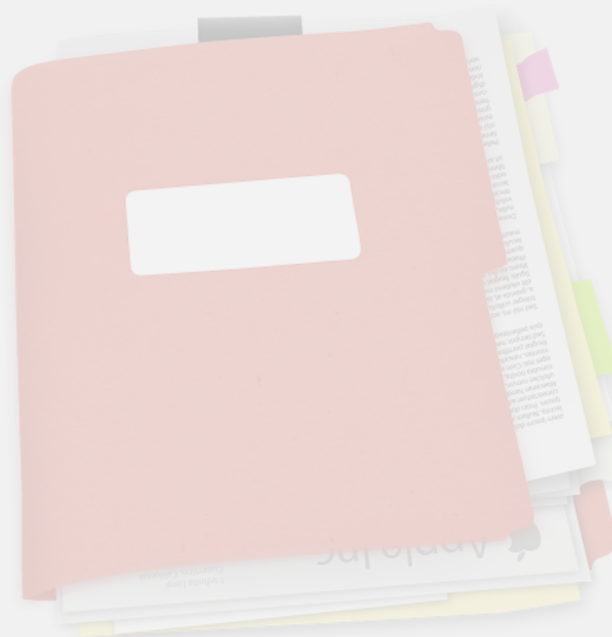
SETTING UP THE ADVENTURE

Location, Ambience

A room with a table and chairs for the amount of participants.

Game components

Most of the required components are digitalised and ready to "Print & go". Click on the icon to download the components of this module.

Once you have downloaded it, make sure you have:

- the folder, designed for the adventure;
- envelope (prepared according to the instructions);
- pencils;
- paper;
- device with internet connection.

FULL DESCRIPTION

Intro & Narrative

Introduce the players by telling them what they have to do (solve the murder mystery together, with the folder given) and when they can open the envelope (when they all agree on who is the killer).

The game can be introduced very briefly like that, giving the players very little information, making the game a bit more mysterious and challenging. But the introduction can be more informative, giving away some information or hints, or directing the players. One way of doing this is by telling some of the story in the game. This makes the players more familiar with the characters and it makes the overarching puzzle slightly easier, since the players don't have to completely piece the story together anymore. Introducing with some story, you might tell the players:

"Five different people (Isiah, Kala, Liseli, Meili and Paul) who found themselves lonely joined a selfhelp program called MonoMazi. Isiah is lonely because of his trauma which makes him grumpy towards others. Kala is lonely because of her drug addiction which makes her manipulate others. Liseli is lonely because of her anxiety. Meili is lonely because she thinks differently (high IQ and believing in conspiracy theories) which drives others off. Paul is lonely because he is an ex prisoner. The group of five plays a murder mystery game together once a week, but one night Liseli gets actually murdered. Nobody knows who did it, but it must be one of the other four. CSI has been handling the crime case so far, but to prevent the wrong person going to jail, you will have to solve this murder mystery. The case file is now in your hands."

You could also tell the players that the key to solving the mystery is finding out who the red player is. This can give the players more direction. You might even want to point out which documents in the folder lead to this key information. Then you might tell the players:

"The documents leading towards the answer are a shredded note, a printed email, a stitching pattern, a crossword and a hair and soil sample."

When you are short on time or you feel the players are really getting lost, you could even tell them how to solve these five puzzles:

"The shredded note has to be put back together like a jigsaw. The printed email contains a code that needs to be deciphered. The stitching pattern needs to be deciphered as well, but then also used to draw out the pattern. The crossword needs to be solved with aid of clever googling. Both the hair sample and the soil sample need to be identified using a reference."

Beware giving away too much information though. Giving such big hints as the last one may be beneficial for time, but it also takes away some of the fun. Speaking of fun, a fun way of giving the players a boost at the start of the game can be to present some of the documents on a crime board, rather than a folder. (During some of the testing players actually build one themselves, which turned out to be pretty useful.) This way of presenting gives the players more overview of the escape game and helps them share found information more easily. You could even link some documents together with red wire to give the players a head start. For instance you could link each registration form with each interview or link one or more registration forms with each corresponding puzzle (Isiah with the crossword, Paul with the samples, Kala with the shredded letter, Meili with the printed email and Liseli with the stitching puzzle) or both.

Description of the flow of the Adventure

The players receive the folder and envelope, and are instructed by the facilitator. The players explore the folder and solve puzzles.

The players put the puzzle pieces together and come to a conclusion. This too can be part of the learning experience.

The game consists of an overarching puzzle (finding out who is the murder via a zebra puzzle). To solve this overarching puzzle five smaller puzzles need to be solved. The five smaller puzzles are a shredded note, a printed email, a weaving pattern, a crossword and a hair and soil sample. The shredded note has to be put back together like a jigsaw. The printed email contains a code that needs to be deciphered. The weaving pattern needs to be deciphered as well, but then also used to draw out the pattern. The crossword needs to be solved with the aid of clever googling. Both the hair sample and the soil sample need to be identified using a reference. The puzzles all relate to real life problems, most of them in the field of forensic research.

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A lot of information can be found in the four interviews. Together they tell a big chunk of the narrative and give you a lot of information about the five main suspects. It also directs the players towards the key question: **Who is red?** Looking more closely you'll find that all of the suspects tell a different version of the night of the murder. Where their stories conflict they must be lying about the event. (As it turns out, they all lied because they were all involved.) They also make themselves look innocent, giving an alibi and pointing the finger at someone else in the group, throwing suspicion around.

Isiah's alibi can be checked by solving his crossword, ruling him out as a main suspect.

Paul has collected a soil and hair sample from the murder scene. By using the references, they can be identified as soil from St. Phillips Bridge and hair from a rat. Paul also points out Kala has worked as a lab assistant, making her a little more likely to have a pet rat.

Kala has shredded a letter. When put back together, the letter turns out the be from red and asks her to meet at St. Phillips Bridge, just before they'd meet at the cafe. This connects the soil and hair sample with the killer: red.

Meili has been hacking Lis' email. The mail turns out to be encoded by Meili. After cracking the code, the mail tells you Paul is purple, ruling him out as a main suspect. Meili tells Barnes how to write the letter 'I' in her code, giving the players a clue for cracking the email.

The only puzzle not mentioned in the interviews is the stitching puzzle. Solving this tells the players Meili has a pet rabbit, not a pet rat. This leaves Kala as the only person who could possible have killed Lis.

The players open the envelope and read the confessions. They reflect on the game and their experiences. Now is also a good time to talk about the topics the facilitator wants to pay attention to.

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👁 What to observe during the adventure

Observe the things you want to talk about with the players after the game ends, such as the gameflow, the puzzle solving, how the players worked together, etc.

🙌 Reflection

The debriefing is a conversation with the players after the game ends, about their experiences, how they solved the puzzles, how they worked together, what they've learned and discuss the topics you want to address (inclusivity, loneliness, forensic research).

- How do you feel during the adventure?
- What happened? How did you contribute to the solution?
- What did you discover? What did you discover about yourself?
- What did you discover about loneliness?
- How can you support others who are lonely?
- What can you do when you yourself feel lonely?

If the players somehow end up choosing the wrong character they will find out they were wrong when they open the envelope. The game is somewhat unforgiving, since the players cannot try again. Once the game is played, it's pretty much over. But being wrong does not have to be problematic. You don't get angry when it turns out someone else than the person you suspected did it in the murder mystery program you're watching. You still enjoyed the ride.

The players can also learn to get over their mistakes (everyone makes them, even real forensics, and the game is challenging) and reflect on where they went wrong to learn from their mistakes.

Additional notes
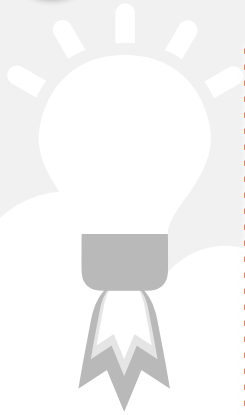
For people who have never done any code cracking:
The *printed_email.pdf* contains a code the players have to crack. It is one of the easiest types of code to crack: a substitution code. This cypher encodes a message by replacing every letter in the alphabet with a different symbol (a bit like the wingdings font does). The substitution used here ignores capitals and punctuation. Spaces between words are kept intact. Generally there are two ways of cracking a substitution code and you can use them both at the same time. The first one is frequency analysis. This means looking at the frequency of a symbol in the code. Certain letters in the English alphabet are more common than others. To be precise:

- E   13%
- T   9%
- A,O   8%
- I,N   7%
- H,R,S   6%
- D,L   4%
- C,U   3%
- B,F,G,M,P,W,Y 2%
- K,V   1%
- J,Q,X,Z   <1%

You are probably not going to notice a difference of 1% in frequency. So trying to differ between a N or R can be really difficult this way. But the method is really useful when it comes to the letter E, which stands out in frequency, and letters like Z, which you are not going to expect a lot of. At the start, looking for a symbol which is more common than all the others will give you pretty much always the letter E. This start helps with the second method: looking for patterns. Words in the English language have certain patterns to them when you look at the letters they are made out of. Words with one letter are pretty much always vowels ('I' or 'A'). Words with two letters are pretty much always a vowel and a consonant ('IS' or 'TO'). And the list goes on. Looking at a code like ⌗◐◑◒◓◐✿, this can only be so many words. It can for instance be

'LETTER' or 'BETTER', but it can't be 'BITTER'. Combining your knowledge of patterns in language with your knowledge of letter frequency tells you it is less likely going to be 'KENNEL' too, because of the frequency of 'K'. When you start filling in some of the letters you expect to be there because of the patterns, you can figure out more difficult words by looking at the sentences that you are unraveling or thinking about certain letter combinations that are common (like 'U' after 'Q' or 'H' after 'T'). At a certain threshold you can basically fill in the gaps by reading. Before you know it, you'll have cracked the code. For the code in *printed_email.pdf* there is also a hint hidden in the interview with Meili, giving you the letter 'I' as a head start.

Setting up the tools for the adventure

- answers;
- printer;
- scissors;
- pens;
- paperclips;
- plain folder;
- plain envelope.

Step by step instructions on how to set up the game tools

To prepare the folder take a plain, brown, writable folder and write on it the following with black/blue pen:

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION
FILE

NAME: MonoMazi Murder Game
CASE No: 2549B
VICTIM: Liseli Fisher
CONTAINING:
crime scene investigation report
two cluedyclues rule books (evidence)
shredded note (evidence)
printed email
weaving pattern (evidence)
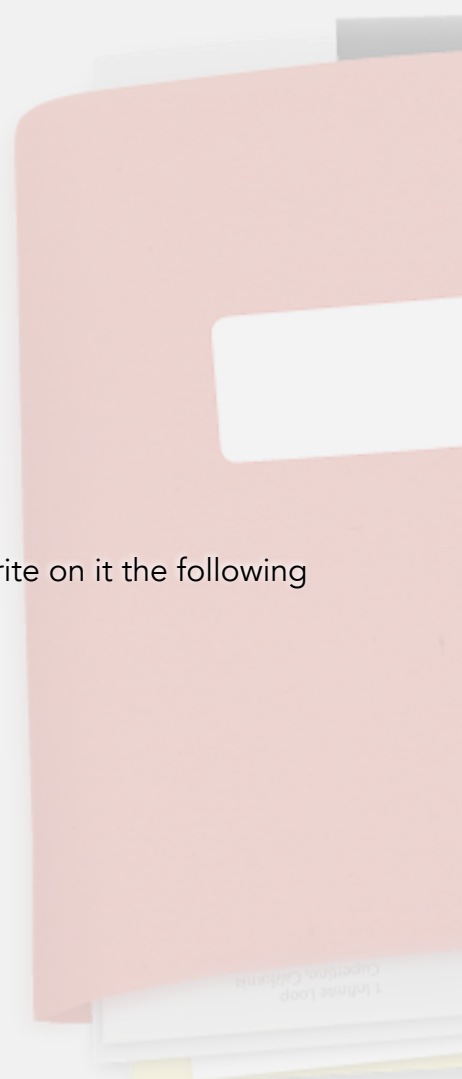*five MonoMazi registration forms*
crossword
hair sample + FRI hair reference
soil sample + FRI soil reference
film stills from I'd do it all for love
four suspect interviews

You can find all the components of this Escape Adventure at:
www.lookingatlearning.eu/ escapeexclusion/toolkit

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There is a certain order in which the documents are put in the folder. This order is not mandatory, but it can help with the gameflow. From top to bottom, this is the order:

- bloody_cluedyclues.pdf (printed doublesided, cut & folded)
- cluedyclues.pdf (printed doublesided, cut & folded)
- crime_scene_investigation_report.pdf (printed & bundled)
- crossword.pdf (printed)
- hair_reference.pdf (printed doublesided & cut)
- hair_sample.pdf (printed)
- I'd_do_it_all_for_love.pdf (printed)
- interview_Isiah.pdf (printed & bundled)
- interview_Kala.pdf (printed & bundled)
- interview_Meili.pdf (printed & bundled)
- interview_Paul.pdf (printed & bundled)
- MMI_Member_Registration_Form_Isiah.pdf (printed)
- MMI_Member_Registration_Form_Kala.pdf (printed)
- MMI_Member_Registration_Form_Liseli.pdf (printed)
- MMI_Member_Registration_Form_Meili.pdf (printed)
- MMI_Member_Registration_Form_Paul.pdf (printed)
- printed_email.pdf (printed & bundled)
- shredded_note.pdf (printed, cut, shredded & bundled)
- soil_reference.pdf (printed & cut)
- soil_sample.pdf (printed)
- stitching_puzzle.pdf (printed)

To prepare the envelope take a plain, writeable envelope and write on it the following with pen:

CONCLUSION

WARNING:
Do not open unless you're absolutely certain who the killer is. If you get this wrong, Tom Barnes will convict his prime suspect. (And let's face it, he's going to be wrong.)

The envelope is sealed and contains:
- confessions.pdf (printed & cut)

Apart from the materials needed for the folder and envelope there is also a document for facilitators with the answers to the puzzles. It's called *answers.pdf.* This can be useful to have in your back pocket while participants are playing the game, to quickly check answers and prevent little mistakes that can later lead to confusion, like spelling mistakes in the crossword.

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